

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 DAMASC 03548 101507Z

53

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SCCT-01 ORM-01 DHA-02

EUR-12 SAJ-01 OMB-01 NEAE-00 /092 W

----- 042921

P R 101440Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4547

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DAMASCUS 3548

GENEVA FOR DEPASSTSEC SAUNDERS, MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS, XF

SUBJ: ASAD'S BBC TELEVISION INTERVIEW

1. SUMMARY: IN HIS SEPT 8 BBC TELEVISION INTERVIEW  
ASAD WAS BLUNTLY CRITICAL OF SINAI ACCORD BUT REAFFIRMED  
FAITH IN ARAB UNITY AND IN EGYPT'S READINESS TO ASSIST  
IN REPELLING ANY FUTURE ISRAELI AGGRESSION. HE LEFT  
OPEN POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE SYRO-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS BUT  
ASSERTED SINAI ACCORD HAD SEVERELY LIMITED  
THEIR PROSPECTS. ASAD REFUSED BE DRAWN INTO ANSWERING  
HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION ABOUT HIS READINESS TO RECOGNIZE  
ISRAEL. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS FIRST MEETING WITH PRESS FOLLOWING OUTBURST OF FUROR  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 DAMASC 03548 101507Z

IN SYRIA SURROUNDING SIGNING OF THE SINAI ACCORD, ASAD

COVERED LARGELY FAMILIAR GROUND IN DESCRIBING SYRIAN POLICY TO BBC TELEVISION INTERVIEWER SEPTEMBER 5. (INTERVIEW WAS CARRIED EVENING SEPTEMBER 8 ON BOTH SYRIAN AND BRITISH TV.) ASAD AVOIDED ANY PERSONAL INVECTIVE ABOUT SADAT WHILE MAKING EMPHATIC HIS DISAGREEMENT WITH SADAT'S DECISION TO SIGN THE INTERIM ACCORD. HE STRESSED REPEATEDLY THAT THE ACCORD VIOLATED WHAT HE TERMED "THE SINGLENESSE OF THE ISSUE." ASSERTED THAT THIS WAS CONTRARY NOT ONLY TO SYRIAN AND ARAB INTERESTS IN GENERAL BUT ALSO AGAINST ESSENCE OF UN RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING THE MIDDLE EAST.

### 3. SYRO-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS:

PRESIDENT CAUTIONED INTERVIEWER AGAINST ASSUMING THAT SYRO-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE DEPENDENT JUST UPON ISRAELI DECISION AND WOULD BE HELD AS SOON AS ISRAEL AGREED. "THIS MAY NOT BE A PRACTICAL ASSUMPTION." HE AFFIRMED HIS INTENT TO COORDINATE EVERY MOVE HE MAKES WITH PALESTINIAN AND JORDANIAN LEADERSHIPS. ASAD WAS GLOOMILY CAUTIOUS IN CONTEMPLATING PROSPECT OF FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS A POLITICAL SOLUTION. WHILE NOT ALL DOORS WERE CLOSED BY THE SINAI ACCORD, HE MADE CLEAR HIS FEELING THAT CHANCES OF FURTHER POLITICAL STEPS HAD GREATLY DIMINISHED. HE EXPRESSED HIS PREFERENCE FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO ACHIEVE FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND SECURING PALESTINIAN RIGHTS THROUGH "INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL TALKS IF THIS IS POSSIBLE."

### 4. TERMINATION OF STATE OF WAR:

AFTER DECRYING EGYPTIAN ACTION AND ASSERTING THAT NO ARAB STATE CAN UNILATERALLY AGREE TO TERMINATE STATE OF WAR, SYRIAN PRESIDENT EFFECTIVELY UNDERMINED HIS OWN ARGUMENT WITH OBSERVATION THAT EGYPTIAN STEP WAS MEANINGLESS SINCE EGYPT WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY JOIN WITH SYRIA IN FIGHTING AGAINST ANY FUTURE "INVASION." OTHERWISE, ASAD REITERATED FAMILIAR POSITION THAT TERMINATION OF STATE OF WAR REQUIRES ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND RESTORATION OF RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS (RIGHTS WHICH ONLY THE PLO COULD DEFINE).

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 DAMASC 03548 101507Z

### 5. SYRIAN NEGOTIATING POSTURE:

BBC INTERVIEWER TOM MANGOLD ARRIVED IN DAMASCUS ILL BRIEFED ABOUT COMPLEXITIES OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION AND WAS RELATIVELY INEFFECTIVE IN PROBING PRESIDENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SYRIAN FUTURE NEGOTIATING POSUTURE. HE DID ELICIT PRESIDENT'S CATEGORICAL REJECTION OF HYPOTHETICAL

ISRAELI OFFER TO WITHDRAW A "FEW HUNDRED METERS." PRESIDENT REAFFIRMED POSITION HE HAD ARTICULATED TO TIME-LIFE GROUP LAST JANUARY THAT DEMILITARIZATION OF ANY PORTION OF GOLAN WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE ONLY WERE COMPARABLE AREA IN ISRAEL TO BE DEMILITARIZED. MANGOLD FENCED WITH ASAD INCONCLUSIVELY OVER QUESTION "WHEN AND IF ALL INJUSTICES ARE ELIMINATED, WILL SYRIAN RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL BECOME A FACT." AFTER SEVERAL EXCHANGES ASAD FINALLY STATED THAT SUBJECT OF RECOGNITION WAS PUTTING CART BEFORE HORSE. HE REJECTED IDEA THAT UN RESES PER SE IMPOSE ON SYRIA A "FORM OF RECOGNITION," ASSERTING THAT UN RESES REFER TO ISRAELI EXISTENCE AND DO NOT REQUIRE SYRIA TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL.

6. SYRO-SOVIET TIES:

PRESIDENT REJECTED INTERVIEWER'S FORMULATION THAT BECAUSE EGYPT WAS DRAWING CLOSER TO US, SYRIA MIGHT BE GETTING CLOSER TO SOVIETS. STATED SIMPLY "WE GET NEITHER CLOSER NOR FURTHER BUT WE AND THE SOVIET UNION ARE LINKED BY FIRM AND STABLE RELATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP."

7. ISRAELI EXPANSIONISM:

IN CONCLUDING MOMENTS OF INTERVIEW PRESIDENT TOUCHED ON COMMONLY HELD SYRIAN CONVICTION THAT ISRAEL REMAINS AN EXPANSIONIST STATE WITH SPECIAL DESIGNS ON TERRITORIES ALONG ITS EASTERN FRONT. HE REAFFIRMED HIS FAITH THAT ARABS WOULD SURMOUNT THEIR PRESENT DIVISIONS PARTICULARLY IN EVENT OF WAR BETWEEN ANY ARAB COUNTRY AND ISRAEL OR BETWEEN ANY ARAB COUNTRY AND ANY OTHER POWER WHICH MIGHT ATTACK SOME PART OF THE ARAB LAND.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 DAMASC 03548 101507Z

8. US ROLE:

ASAD AVOIDED ANY COMMENT ABOUT US ROLE IN SINAI ACCORD. ON SEPTEMBER 8, HOWEVER, IN ADDRESSING A BANQUET IN HIS HONOR GIVEN BY CZECH PRESIDENT HUSAK IN PRAGUE, ASAD DID CREDIT US MILITARY AND FINANCIAL AID WITH ENCOURAGING ISRAELI RESUMPTION OF ITS "OLD POLICY OF DEFYING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY."  
MURPHY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS CONFERENCES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PEACE OBSERVATION MISSIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 SEP 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ElyME  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975DAMASC03548  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750313-0451  
**From:** DAMASCUS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750963/aaaacdrcl.tel  
**Line Count:** 163  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ElyME  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 09 MAY 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <09 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <01 OCT 2003 by ElyME>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ASAD'S BBC TELEVISION INTERVIEW  
**TAGS:** PFOR, SY, IS, XF, (ASAD, HAFIZ)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006